

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Former Knoxville Southern Railroad from near Reliance to near Farner NA ☐ not for publication  
city or town Reliance ☒ vicinity  
stat Tennessee code TN county Polk code 139 zip code 37369  
e \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National  
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☒ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
3	0	sites
13	0	structures
0	0	objects
17	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION; rail-related

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/

Energy Facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION; rail-related

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/

Energy Facility

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls N/A

roof N/A

other Steel/Concrete/Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ENGINEERING

INDUSTRY

### Period of Significance

1890-1957

### Significant Dates

1890/1898/1941

### Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Engineer: Aber, T.A.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District

Polk County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 505.3 acres Farner 133 NE and McFarland 133 NW

**UTM References**  
(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

☒ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Teresa Douglass, Phil Thomason				
organization	Thomason & Associates			date	December 2, 2006
street & number	1907 21 <sup>st</sup> Ave. South			telephone	615/385-4960
city or town	Nashville	state	TN	zip code	37212

## Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

## Continuation Sheets

## Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

## Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**  
(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner \_\_\_\_\_

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Polk County, Tennessee

## DESCRIPTION

The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District is located along a portion of the historic Knoxville Southern Railroad through the rugged Hiwassee River gorge in Polk County, Tennessee. The district extends from the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad Bridge at Reliance, Tennessee to just south of the Bald Mountain Switchback located to the south of the Hiwassee Loop, a total distance of approximately nineteen miles. Going west to east, the railroad crosses the Hiwassee River at an elevation of approximately 800' and then gradually ascends the Hiwassee River gorge with the railroad sited on the south bank of the river. For the next eighteen miles the railroad twists and curves through the Hiwassee River gorge with the river on the north side of the railroad and dense woodlands of the Cherokee National Forest on the south side of the railroad. The railroad reaches its highest point at the "Loop" at an elevation of approximately 1,380' before continuing south towards the community of Farner. Throughout its length in the Hiwassee River gorge the Knoxville Southern Railroad passes through heavily forested terrain.

The Knoxville Southern Railroad was originally constructed in 1890. Despite the difficult terrain, the railroad was built in order to transport the vast copper ore that existed in the vicinity of Copperhill and Ducktown. The railroad was originally designed with a series of switchbacks to ascend and descend Bald Mountain. However, this proved to be a difficult and expensive method to move rail cars over the mountain. In 1898, the innovative "Loop" was built in which the railroad made a complete circle or loop above itself as it crossed the mountain. The railroad was eventually acquired by the L&N Railroad, which operated the line for much of the twentieth century. Between Etowah and Copperhill numerous railroad sidings were built along with small stations and dwellings for railroad employees. With the decline of rail traffic after World War II, most of these stations, dwellings, and ancillary buildings were razed or moved. The railroad remained in use during these decades as it continued to transport copper ore, chemicals and other products along the line. The CSX Railroad abandoned the line between Wetmore and Copperhill in 2002. The line then was purchased by the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association. The railroad line is now used to haul freight and for scenic excursions.

The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District extends along the length of the railroad bed between Reliance and the Bald Mountain Switchback near the community of Farner. The main component of the district is the rail line, which is one contributing structure that includes the railroad bed, tracks, and spur lines including the 1890 Bald Mountain Switchback, the 1937 Mountain Wye Spur, and the famed 1898 Hiwassee Loop. The district boundary is linear and includes roughly one hundred feet on either side of the railroad's embankment (the railroad right-of-way) in order to encompass a variety of associated sites and structures along the line including six bridges, three community sites, and the Apalachia Powerhouse and penstocks. This power facility was constructed along the line in the early 1940s by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the railroad played an intricate role in its development and operation. The boundary of the district is also drawn to include the railroad and lumber community townsite of Probst. Located near mile marker 347, this is a contributing site and at this location is also a ca. 1970 non-contributing seasonal use dwelling. This property is the only non-contributing feature within the historic district boundary. Contributing resources are noted in **bold** in the following text.

The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District boundary begins at the **Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge over the Hiwassee River** near mile marker 346. This boundary is approximately 100' southeast of the Reliance Historic District that was listed on the National Register on March 13, 1986. The Knoxville

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Southern originally constructed a wooden bridge over the Hiwassee River in 1890 that rested on stone piers. This bridge was replaced in 1914 with a steel through truss girder deck. In 1938 the bridge was replaced once again by the L&N Railroad with a deck plate girder bridge to support heavy equipment moved on the railroad in order to build the Apalachia Hydroelectric Project. During the late twentieth century additional concrete support piers were added alongside the original stone piers. The original hooks used by the watchman to hang buckets of water to put out track fires are still located along the bridge.

**Figure 1: Knoxville Southern Railroad Bridge over the Hiwassee River at Reliance.**

After crossing the Hiwassee River the railroad passes over the **Ellis Creek Bridge** built in 1903 and the **Big Lost Creek Bridge** built in 1904. Both bridges have wooden decks and stone piers. Just past the bridge is the site of the community of **Probst** near mile marker 347. Probst was established around 1908 as a logging camp for the Prendergast Lumber Company. The community was named in honor of W.S. Probst, Secretary of the Prendergast Lumber Company. This company purchased large tracts of land in the vicinity and Probst was built with a commissary, an office building, a manager's house and worker's housing. There were a reported 25 buildings at Probst and a population of two hundred in 1911.<sup>1</sup> The company built a logging railroad up the valley of Big Lost Creek and the logs were hauled to the railroad line at Probst and then transported to the Prendergast sawmill at Wetmore, Tennessee.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 2: Big Lost Creek Bridge just west of Probst .**

**Figure 3: Four buildings remained at Probst on the 1957 McFarland USGS quad map. This map also shows the steep topography in the Hiwassee River gorge.**

For several decades Probst was a flag station on the railroad but by the mid-1920s the lumber in the area had been extracted and the Prendergast Lumber Company ceased operations. The 1927 McFarland USGS quad map shows eight buildings located at Probst south of the railroad tracks. This number of buildings remains consistent through the 1930s and the buildings are shown on the 1943 Ducktown Quad Map. The 1957 McFarland USGS quad map shows four buildings at Probst. In 2006, the only building remaining at Probst is a ca. 1970 recreational dwelling.

<sup>1</sup> Roy G. Lillard, *The History of Polk County, Tennessee* (Benton, TN: Polk County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1999), 260.

<sup>2</sup> Thurman Parish, *The Old Home Place, Pioneer Life in Polk County, Tennessee* (Benton, TN: Polk County Publishing, 1994), 93.

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Polk County, Tennessee**Figure 4: Site of the community of Probst.**

Approximately one mile east of the site of Probst between mile markers 347 and 348 is the **Hiwassee Siding**. A railroad siding capable of containing 43 cars was established at Hiwassee in the 1890s. Located between mile marker 347 and 348, a station or stop was listed at this site in 1905 and 1913. It is unknown if there were ever any buildings erected at Hiwassee. None are shown at this location on either the 1927 or 1943 USGS quad maps. The siding has been abandoned and the rails removed.

**Figure 5: View of the abandoned siding at Hiwassee.****Figure 6: Example of typical stone culverts built along the railroad to divert water beneath the railroad embankment.**

Past the Hiwassee Siding the railroad gradually ascends the Hiwassee River gorge and crosses several named and unnamed streams over stone culverts. Between mile marker 351 and 352 is the **Smith Creek Bridge** built in 1920 of wood with stone piers. Just past this bridge is the **Apalachia Powerhouse** completed in 1943 by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The hydroelectric project was one of three built by TVA in this area of Tennessee and North Carolina. Construction began in 1941 and the powerhouse was placed on line with two turbines in 1943. The dam is located approximately eight miles to the east of the powerhouse and two tunnels and penstocks transport the water west to the powerhouse to generate the turbines. The railroad line runs directly between the powerhouse and the two penstocks, and a spur line leads to the powerhouse itself. Construction of the Apalachia Hydroelectric Development required the rebuilding of the bridge at Reliance in order to bring in the heavy equipment needed for dam building and installation of the turbines. Other upgrades to the railroad included the addition or expansion of sidings at Turtletown, Apalachia, McFarland, and Farner. The "Wye" railroad spur south of The Loop was also built at this time as an additional siding for train cars bearing construction materials. Located just north of the railroad, the powerhouse is a one-story concrete building with original steel casement windows and a flat roof. The two steel penstocks are on the south side of the railroad.

**Figure 7: The Knoxville Southern Railroad passes between the powerhouse and penstocks (1957 McFarland USGS quad).**

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Polk County, Tennessee**Figure 8: The Apalachia Powerhouse and Penstocks built in 1943.****Figure 9: One of the larger stone culverts along the railroad, just east of the Apalachia Powerhouse.**

Continuing east from the Apalachia Powerhouse, the railroad passes through a tight opening in the gorge known as the "Narrows" between mile marker 353 and 354 and crosses the **Butler Branch Bridge** built in 1902. This bridge has a wood deck and stone abutments. At mile marker 355 is the site of the community of **McFarland** that was established in 1890 and served as a railroad stop between Copperhill and Reliance. A post office was opened at McFarland in 1895, and a two-story frame hotel and general store were also built by 1898 and operated by Thomas H. Breen.<sup>3</sup> A frame station building was constructed at McFarland, and in 1905 A.R. Arp was listed as the station agent. At its height McFarland contained about a dozen buildings. Seven buildings are shown at McFarland on both the 1927 and 1943 USGS quad maps and these were located both to the north and south of the railroad. In addition to the railroad, McFarland was accessed by an improved road that extended southwest to the Rymers community. The 1953 State Highway map shows only three buildings remaining at McFarland and in 1957 only one building is shown on the McFarland USGS quad map. The McFarland siding was expanded in 1941 to help facilitate the construction of the Apalachia Powerhouse.

Although no buildings remain on the landscape, McFarland does retain a number of aboveground foundations and other surface features. The bed of the 1941 siding remains visible and this siding continues to display some of the original crossties although the rails have been removed. Several brick and stone foundations associated with the hotel, dwellings and other buildings are clustered close together. Among these sites are the remains of a cistern or well. To the south of this collection of foundations are the well-preserved concrete footings of a water tank. McFarland is a contributing site to the district.

**Figure 10: View of a house site in McFarland with associated domestic Yucca plants.****Figure 11: Stone foundations at McFarland.****Figure 12: Remains of a concrete and brick water cistern at McFarland.**

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<sup>3</sup> Roy G. Lillard, *The History of Polk County*, 255.



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**Figure 13: Located to the east of the McFarland siding are concrete piers that once supported a water tank. A total of nine piers are set in three rows that extend up the slope.**

**Figure 14: Located between mile marker 353 and 354 is a small steel girder and wood bridge typical of the smaller bridges built in the early 1900s to span small unnamed streams.**

Continuing east from McFarland the railroad passes over the **Wolf Creek Bridge** at mile marker 356. This concrete and wood bridge was completed in 1957. In another mile the railroad passes over the **Turtletown Creek Bridge** just past mile marker 357. This bridge was erected in 1902 and has stone abutments. At mile marker 360 is the site of the community of **Apalachia**. Apalachia was originally an industrial town on the north side of the Hiwassee River at the confluence of Shuler Creek. Lumber and wood chemicals were manufactured at this location and after the construction of the Knoxville Southern Railroad, a station was built on the south side of the river to help ship these products via rail. An overhead tram was used to haul products over the river from the north bank to the south bank. Known as Apalachia Station, this small railroad community consisted of several dwellings and a station. When the timber boom came to an end in the 1920s the original town of Apalachia declined and it became known as "Old Apalachia." Apalachia Station then became known simply as Apalachia. Apalachia is included as a contributing site to the district.

**Figure 15: Turtletown Creek Bridge built in 1902 with cut stone abutments.**

**Figure 16: The Farner USGS quad map of 1978 shows no buildings remaining at the site of Apalachia.**

In 1905 the station agent was J.R. Kennedy, and a station remained at this location for several decades. A siding was built at Apalachia that could hold up to 39 cars. The 1925 profile report listed Apalachia as containing a new railroad station built in 1924 and at the site was also a 50,000-gallon water tank that was added to the site in 1911.<sup>4</sup> During the mid-1930s there were five buildings at this location, all of which were

<sup>4</sup> "Louisville & Nashville Railroad, Atlanta Division, Condensed Profile, 1925."

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west of the railroad. Three of these were Section Houses and sometimes two families would live in one house. The siding was enlarged in 1941 during the construction of the Apalachia Powerhouse. During the construction of the nearby dam in the early 1940s Apalachia boasted numerous dwellings and other buildings. A map of Apalachia completed by TVA in 1942 shows the community with a railroad station, three houses and several sheds along with the siding. By the 1970s all of the buildings at Apalachia were no longer extant. Apalachia continues to retain its railroad siding that was expanded and improved in the early 1940s. This siding retains not only its cross ties but its rails as well. No buildings remain extant but there are several brick house foundations that remain. Concrete piers that supported the water tank are also at the site to the east of the housing area. To the east of Apalachia the railroad's **State Route 68 Bridge** built in 1920 passes over the highway below.

**Figure 17: Views of the concrete piers that supported the water tank.**

**Figure 18: View of the Apalachia siding.**

**Figure 19: House foundations at Apalachia.**

After Apalachia, the railroad begins its ascent up Bald Mountain to the **Hiwassee Loop**. The Hiwassee Loop was built in 1898 and designed by L&N engineer T.A. Aber. The railroad track loops around itself for a distance of 8,000 feet and is part of a six-mile section of track that rises 400' between Apalachia and the Mountain Wye Spur. The Hiwassee Loop makes its ascent with a maximum grade of 1.55 %. It is believed to be the third longest rail loop in the world and circles Bald Mountain two times.<sup>5</sup> At the summit it crosses over itself on a wooden trestle that is 62' high and 195' in length. Two sets of steel railroad tracks are side by side at the Hiwassee Loop to help prevent derailments.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael George, *Louisville & Nashville's Atlanta Division*, (Collegedale, TN: The College Press Collegedale, 2000), 30. The other two longest loops are the Tehachapi Loop in California and the Angasolka Loop on the Trans-Siberian Railway in Russia.

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The Hiwassee Loop was built to replace a switchback constructed by the Knoxville Southern Railroad in 1890. This switchback was "W" shaped which created a bottleneck on the west slopes of Bald Mountain. Train engines could only pull three or four cars over the mountain having to couple and uncouple to pass the cars through each section of the switchback. Following the acquisition of the Knoxville Southern Railroad by the Atlanta, Knoxville, and Northern Railroad (AK&N), rail traffic boomed and a new solution was needed. The railroad company contracted with L&N engineer T.A. Aber and he designed the innovative loop over the top of Bald Mountain. While on the Loop, a train of at least 88 cars long would pass over itself. If the engineer looked straight down while on the trestle, he could see the rear car on his train 62' below.

**Figure 20: Profile of the loop on the 1978 Farner USGS quad map.**

**Figure 21: View of the railroad line and the trestle that loops above it.**

**Figure 22: View of the railroad line as it begins to make its curve to the southeast.**

**Figure 23: Views of the Hiwassee Loop trestle and the railroad line below.**

To the south of the Hiwassee Loop at mile marker 364 is the **Mountain Wye Spur** that was built in 1939 as part of the planning and construction of the Apalachia Hydroelectric Project. This hydroelectric project was begun in 1941 and completed in 1943. The Mountain Wye Spur was designed to provide a place to turn the steam engines that pulled the trains of building materials up from Etowah and Copperhill. Following the construction of the Apalachia project the rails were removed but the railroad bed of the Mountain Wye Spur remains readily visible. It extends over 200' and consists of the earth bed with no cross ties or rails extant. Between mile marker 364 and 365 are the remnants of the **Bald Mountain Switchback** that was built in 1890. The switchback was used to transport rail cars around Bald Mountain prior to the construction of the Hiwassee Loop in 1898. Abandoned since this time, the roadbed of the switchback is eroded but some sections remain visible. The setting and feeling of the railroad no longer retains integrity south of mile marker 365. To the south is the community of Farner which is composed primarily of post-1957 buildings and structures. Beyond Farner are other communities and rural areas that no longer retain integrity from the railroad's period of significance.

**Figure 24: The railroad bed of the Mountain Wye Spur extends from the main rail line.**

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**Figure 25: Original Switchback lines of the railroad. (*Map courtesy of Louisville & Nashville's Atlanta Division by Michael George.*)**

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Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District  
Polk County, Tennessee

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### *Summary Statement*

The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District is located in the Appalachian Mountains of southeastern Tennessee in Polk County. The district includes a nineteen-mile section of the Knoxville Southern Railroad that runs south of the Hiwassee River between the community of Reliance to just north of the community of Farner. The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District is eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C. Under criterion A the railroad is significant in the areas of transportation and industry for its role in the development of southeast Tennessee. The building of the railroad was instrumental in accessing the mineral resources of the copper basin of Tennessee and provided efficient passenger service on the line between Atlanta and Knoxville. The historic district is significant under criterion C for the engineering design of the Hiwassee Loop. One of the longest such railroad loops in the world, this design of 1898 provided a means to ascend and descend mountainous terrain to facilitate railroad operations. The design of the Hiwassee Loop remains intact and is illustrative of innovative engineering methods for railroad construction at the turn of the century.<sup>6</sup>

The district's period of significance extends from 1890, the date of the railroad's construction to 1957. The year 1957 is not only used for the National Register's fifty-year criteria but it also marks the decade when railroad service declined in this section of the state. All of the depots were closed for passenger service during the early 1950s and many of the Section Houses and associated railroad buildings were abandoned. The USGS quad maps of the area show a significant loss of buildings in the historic district from the 1940s to the 1950s. No buildings or structures are known to have been built after 1957 within the historic district except for one non-contributing recreational cabin at Probst.

The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District includes the railroad bed between the community of Reliance to just north of the community of Farner. Each mile of the railroad is identified by mile markers and the district extends from mile marker 346 to 365. The district includes the sites of the communities and siding stations of Probst, Hiwassee, McFarland, and Apalachia. The district also includes the Apalachia Powerhouse and Penstocks, which are considered contributing resources. Although not built by the railroad, the construction of the Apalachia hydroelectric facility along the Hiwassee River took place largely because of the existence of the railroad and the accessibility of the dam and powerhouse sites. The L&N Railroad upgraded its sidings at Turtletown, Farner, and Apalachia in order to facilitate construction of this project as well as the rebuilding of the Hiwassee River Bridge. The Apalachia Hydroelectric Development is considered eligible for the National Register by TVA as part of the overall design and construction of the TVA during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The historic district may be eligible under criterion D for its potential to yield information on the lifestyles and architecture of the railroad and lumber companies along this route. At this date no archaeological survey has been completed along the rail line.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Tichy, Cultural Resources Program, Tennessee Valley Authority, Telephone Interview, with Philip Thomason, 17 May 2005. Also, letter from Kathryn J. Jackson, FPO for TVA, stating that the powerhouse in Tennessee and dam in North Carolina are considered eligible by the agency.

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The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District retains much of its integrity from its period of significance. The location of the original railroad bed and sidings has not been extensively altered. The overall design of this section of railroad is intact as is the Hiwassee Loop. While some of the original materials used in the construction of the railroad have been replaced, they have been replaced in kind. The very nature of railroads and their exposure to the elements requires periodic replacement of the steel rails and the wood cross ties. The majority of the wooden cross ties have been replaced with new ties to match but many of the steel rails continue to date from the 1940s and early 1950s. Bridges also have to be rebuilt as they deteriorate or are washed away by floods. Integrity of setting, feeling, and association is also largely intact. When the railroad was constructed up the Hiwassee River gorge there were few buildings along the river and the overall terrain was one of heavily wooded mountains and ridges. This landscape remains intact today and the overall character of the historic district has not changed since the late nineteenth century. Approximately 20 to 25 railroad or lumber related buildings and structures were on the landscape in the district from 1890 to 1957. These buildings are no longer extant but many of their foundations and other surface features remain and are indicative of the railroad's history in the Hiwassee River gorge.

**Figure 26: View of the railroad between Reliance and McFarland in 1943 (USGS Ducktown 15-min quadrangle).**

**Figure 27: View of the railroad between McFarland and Farner in 1943 (USGS Ducktown 15-min quadrangle).**

**Figure 28: Detail of the Hiwassee Loop in 1943 (USGS Ducktown 15-min quadrangle).**

*Additional Information*

The Knoxville Southern Railroad developed out of the mounting interest and construction of railroads throughout the South during the late nineteenth century. In the region of East Tennessee and North Georgia, railroad development primarily grew out of an effort to exploit the region's wealth of natural resources. The mountainous area of East Tennessee and North Georgia contained valuable mineral deposits, marble quarries, and an abundance of timber. The idea of constructing a rail line through the region emerged in order to efficiently transport these goods to markets in Atlanta and other cities. The first attempt to build a rail line in the region came in 1854 with the incorporation of the Ellijay Railroad which planned to place a line between Marietta, Georgia and the north Georgia mountains. The Civil War, however, delayed the project as did several successive organizational changes. Although money was scarce in the region in the aftermath of the Civil War, prominent Marietta citizens General William Phillips and J. Bolling Glover, who were strong proponents of the line, were able to encourage sufficient local

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investment by promising substantial future profits. By the mid-1870s, the organization was known as the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad (M&NG) and construction of the line began in 1875.<sup>8</sup>

The mountainous terrain made construction of the line difficult and expensive. To keep costs down, convict labor was used and curves and steep grades were chosen over tunnels and costly cuts through the mountains. It was originally built as a narrow gauge line and was not converted into a standard gauge until the late 1880s. By 1882, the line extended twenty-four miles between Marietta and Canton, Georgia. Funds, however, were running low and the M&NG struggled to survive. At that time brothers Joseph and Abraham Kinsey came to the line's aide. The two Ohio entrepreneurs had various enterprises near Murphy, North Carolina including a substantial copper mine. Their method of transporting the ore out of the region via oxen-drawn wagons was insufficient, and the brothers offered to extend the M&NG line to Murphy. The corporation accepted the offer and Joseph Kinsey became the company's new president.<sup>9</sup> Progress on the line again moved forward as it headed toward Blue Ridge near the Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee state lines. Construction along this section included the portion of the line known as the "Hook" around Tate Mountain, where a large curve of four miles of track were used to gain two and one-half miles of distance between the villages of Talking Rock and Whitestone.<sup>10</sup>

After about a year, the Kinsey brothers sold their interest in the line to Englishman George Eager, who entered a race against time to complete the line to Ellijay, Georgia. Anxious to see the line complete, citizens of Gilmer County, Georgia gave Eager the incentive of an additional \$10,000 if he completed the line by the end of November, 1883. On the evening of November 29<sup>th</sup> with a mere two miles left to reach his goal, Eager received an order from the governor that immediately canceled the lease of the convict laborers used to build the line.<sup>11</sup> Although he didn't receive the extra bonus, Eager completed the line to Ellijay and then on to Murphy, North Carolina in 1887. Shortly thereafter the organization was renamed the Marietta and North Georgia Railway (instead of Railroad).

As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, the city of Knoxville, Tennessee also wished to gain the benefit of a rail line that connected it to southern markets. Although the M&NG received permission to extend its line northward to Knoxville as well as southward to Atlanta in 1889 it never acted on the opportunity. Instead, the Knoxville Southern Railroad, which had incorporated in 1887, elected to construct a line between Knoxville and the M&NG line at the Georgia-Tennessee state line at Copperhill, Tennessee. A track covering this distance of 107 miles was completed in July of 1890. In order to make the connection of the two lines possible, the M&NG built around thirteen miles of track between Blue Ridge, Georgia and Copperhill, Tennessee. In late November of 1890 the roads were consolidated and known as the Marietta and North Georgia Railway.<sup>12</sup>

The area surrounding Copperhill was known as the Great Copper Basin and was the source of significant copper mines. Prior to the railroad, oxen hauled the ore out over rough mountain trails and mining in the

<sup>8</sup> H.G. Monroe, "Hook and Eye Division," in *Railroad Magazine* (June 1940), 8; Kincaid Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, 1850-1963* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1964), 144. Herr states that construction on the line commenced in 1874, while Monroe claims that initial grading on the line started in 1876.

<sup>9</sup> Monroe, "Hook and Eye Division," 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, 1850-1963*, 144-145.

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region was conducted in a very primitive manner. The copper ore was placed in large piles and smelted by burning large quantities of wood beneath it. This method had a tremendous negative impact on the surrounding environment as forests were denuded to supply timber for the fires and the resulting smoke destroyed all vegetation. Following the completion of the railroad through the area, the Tennessee Copper Company moved into the area and improvements in mining and smelting emerged. Smoke from the smelting process was captured rather than released into the atmosphere, and a number of copper by-products were developed.<sup>13</sup> Originally named "McKays" after property owner Herbert McKay, the community's name was later changed to Copperhill.

Construction of the railroad line between Knoxville and Copperhill presented numerous challenges. Once again time and money were important factors. M&NG executive George Eager financed the construction of the 107-mile line at \$20,000 per mile while the City of Knoxville invested \$275,000. Knoxville's investment, however, was dependent upon Eager completing the line by July 1, 1890. With teams of laborers working at both the north and south ends of the line, Eager was determined not to miss his deadline this time around. The most significant obstacle along the course was Bald Mountain. East of the community of Apalachia, the line's right-of-way followed the gorge of the Hiwassee River, and in order to reach the riverbanks the line coming from the south had to drop several hundred feet on the mountain's steep slope in only a few miles. As the two laboring teams converged on Bald Mountain, Eager reportedly instructed his chief engineer, "I don't give a damn what you do to your tracks, but get to that river fast."<sup>14</sup>

Eager's engineers arrived at a series of switchbacks to solve the problem. This zigzag design allowed the track to drop approximately seventy-five feet on the southeast side of the mountain and created a giant "W" on the mountainside. The somewhat crude design made for inefficient navigation along the route as only three or four cars could maneuver over the switchback at one time. However, its construction met the challenge presented by Bald Mountain and allowed the line to be completed by the required date. The north and south rails were joined at Apalachia on the last day of June, 1890. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the first train pulled into Knoxville to meet an enthusiastic crowd. Regular train service between Knoxville and Atlanta, however, did not begin until mid-August. The schedule was one train per day each way making the twelve-hour trip.<sup>15</sup>

A retired conductor of the line, Captain George Green, later recalled his experiences on the line. Green began working on the line in 1891 when it was still a narrow gauge. As a brakeman he earned \$1.25 a day. The completion of the line to Knoxville created a demand for more workers, and Green became a conductor at \$50 per month. Green recalled that his crew commonly worked twelve to fifteen hours a day, and as few agents were along the line he was responsible for many tasks including checking baggage, collecting fares, and numerous other details.<sup>16</sup> Green remembers the switchbacks over Bald Mountain were especially dangerous, and he recalls that prior to his first trip over the line he received a message from his supervisor to be careful on the mountain. Travel across the "W" was tedious as well as treacherous:

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 145-146.<sup>14</sup> Monroe, "Hook and Eye Division," 11.<sup>15</sup> Ibid.; Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, 1850-1963*, 147; Maury Klein, *History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1972), 309.<sup>16</sup> "Retired Veteran Reviews Early Days of Railroads," *Lively Lines*, ca. 1920. L&N Collection, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY, 7-8.



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After leaving Farner with a train, on reaching the top of the mountain, the engine and four or five cars would be cut off and go ahead through the first cut of the "W" then another cut of cars would be cut loose with men on top who had clubs to keep the brakes in check, this performance continuing until all cars had been passed through the "W" and the train could be coupled up and ready for the continuance of the trip. . . The ascent of the mountain was made with the assistance of a special constructed locomotive with large saddle bag [sic] tank. This engine and crew did nothing else but play between Farner and Appalachia, assisting trains over the mountain, often making two and three trips to get the entire train over.<sup>17</sup>

The M&NG continued to experience management and financial problems, and the troubled corporation went into receivership in 1891. In 1896, the railroad was sold to Henry K. McHarg, a stock market speculator who purchased several bankrupt railroads to sell them later at a significant profit. McHarg paid a reported \$956,500 for the line, the amount of its indebtedness, and renamed the line the Atlanta, Knoxville & Northern (AK&N). The new management proved to be a benefit to the line and traffic along the route increased. McHarg purchased six engines from the Pennsylvania & Lake Erie Railroad to handle the increased freight. Legend states that he traded Arbuckle coffee coupons for them, and the engines subsequently became known as "Arbuckles."<sup>18</sup>

The switchback on Bald Mountain proved to be a hindrance to the increased traffic on the line. With navigation limited to three or four cars at a time over the "W," the design was inefficient to meet the increased demands. In frustration, McHarg borrowed L&N Railroad engineer T.A. Aber to devise a better design. Aber's answer was the famed Hiwassee Loop in which the track extends around the mountain some 8,000 feet in almost two complete loops. The loop accommodates a drop of 426 feet in six miles between the communities of Farner and Apalachia. After making one complete circle around the mountain, the track crosses underneath itself then circles the mountain again. At the base of the mountain just before completing the second loop, the line reaches the Hiwassee River and parallels it for approximately fifteen miles. Trains that travel the loop face all points of the compass and the route provides views of Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia. The famous loop is said to be among the longest railroad loops in the world and along with the sharp curve on Tate Mountain, earned the line the nickname "Hook and Eye."<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 29: Early twentieth century illustration of the Hiwassee Loop. (Photo Courtesy of the L&N Passenger Station Museum, Etowah, TN)**

**Figure 30: A train on the Hiwassee Loop trestle in 1902. (Photo courtesy of Louisville & Nashville's Atlanta Division by Michael George)**

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>18</sup> Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, 1850-1963*, 147-148; Monroe, "The Hook and Eye Division," 12.

<sup>19</sup> Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, 1850-1963*, 148-150; Klein, *History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad*, 309.

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The Hiwassee Loop was a great improvement over the original switchback and traffic on the Atlanta, Knoxville & Northern (AK&N) line increased steadily. The line primarily served as a freight route dedicated to the region's natural resources. The company's gross earnings from its freight service more than doubled from 1898 to 1902 rising from \$255,240 to \$487,422. Overall net earnings for the company during this same period grew from \$409 to just over \$1,000. Ores were the primary products shipped over the line with nearly 147,000 tons transported in the year ending in June 1902. Other substantial products transported over the line were coal, coke, marble, stone and sand, and lumber and other wood products. The line also carried agricultural products including grain, flour, cotton, tobacco, livestock, and fruits and vegetables, as well as some manufactured goods such as machinery, agricultural implements, and furniture and other household goods. Although freight was the line's primary market, it also provided some passenger and mail service. Its gross earnings from passenger service increased from \$67,511.55 in 1898 to \$102,820.71 in 1902.<sup>20</sup>

In 1902, the line once again changed hands as the Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad acquired the line. By this time the L&N was one of the largest railroad companies in the nation and the large conglomerate commonly expanded through the purchase of smaller companies such as the AK&N. Following its purchase of the AK&N line, the L&N engaged in rebuilding most of the track between Knoxville and what became the community of Etowah. Improvements included the replacement of the original 1890 Knoxville Southern bridge over the Hiwassee River. The original wooden bridge rested on stone piers and was replaced in 1914 with a steel through truss girder deck. This bridge was then replaced in the 1930s to accommodate heavy equipment transported on the railroad to build the Apalachia Hydroelectric Project. The L&N also began construction of a new line from Etowah to Junta, Georgia, where it connected with the Western & Atlantic Railroad. This low-grade line was completed in April of 1906. The community of Etowah, Tennessee emerged at the junction of the "old" and "new" lines as a scattering of homes and stores sprang up at the junction. The L&N's decision to establish shops and division headquarters at the junction spurred rapid growth of the town. The L&N shops at Etowah were completed in November of 1906 and the master mechanic relocated his office there from Blue Ridge, Georgia the following January. Division headquarters were shifted from Marietta, Georgia to Etowah in April of 1908.<sup>21</sup> Etowah remained an important location for the L&N until 1931 when the company consolidated its Knoxville and Atlanta divisions and moved its division headquarters from Etowah to Knoxville. The shops at Etowah were extensive and consisted of a power station, machine shops, boiler and smith shop, planning mill, carpenter shop and a roundhouse. The L&N also constructed a passenger depot at Etowah (NR 10/17/77) as well as an office building and a railroad YMCA (Part of the Etowah Historic District, NR 7/25/96).<sup>22</sup> The L&N constructed a number of freight and passenger stations along the line as well. These included combination stations built in 1906 at Farner and Ducktown, Tennessee, and Blue Ridge, Georgia. A sizeable passenger station was constructed in 1907 at Copperhill, Tennessee as was a separate large freight station to accommodate the region's ample export of copper ore and other materials. These one-story buildings were of frame construction with weatherboard siding.

In addition to freight and passenger depots, numerous rail-related buildings and structures were constructed along the tracks between 1890 and the 1950s. These included domestic structures such as dwellings for engineers, foremen and brakemen; Section Houses for maintenance crews; and watchman shanties located

<sup>20</sup> "Sixth Annual Report of the Atlanta, Knoxville & Northern Railway company for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1902," (Knoxville, TN: Gaut-Ogden Co., Printers and Binders, 1902), n.p.

<sup>21</sup> Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, 1850-1963*, 154-155.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 155, 167.

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where regular switch-tenders were required at sharp curves, crossover rails, bridges and other exposed points. Small sleeping rooms, clubhouses, and reading rooms for railroad employees also existed along the line. The railroad company also built engine houses, or roundhouses, section tool houses, car sheds and cleaning yards to service the trains, and signal towers, icehouses, sand houses, water stations, oil storage facilities, ashpits, and coaling stations existed along the tracks. Other developments along the line included sidings, short spur lines of track parallel to the main line, which were built alongside the main track in order to provide temporary storage for train cars or as a location to perform repairs. Also, metal, wood, or concrete mile markers were installed to provide information concerning a train's location along the line and to help gauge speed.

The impact of the L&N on southeast Tennessee was enormous. The company built its large rail yards at Etowah beginning in 1906 and both the railroad's commerce and the community expanded over the next two decades. Between Etowah and Copperhill (Copperhill Historic District, NR 5/15/92) numerous railroad sidings were built along with small stations and dwellings for railroad employees. A number of small communities arose along the line, several of which were adjacent to L&N depots. L&N Railroad timetables from the early twentieth century show a number of stations along the line between Etowah and Copperhill. The 1913 timetable shows twelve stations along the route between Etowah and Farner. Communities along the line included Cambria, Wetmore, Oswald Dome, Austral, Reliance, Probst, Hiwassee, McFarland, Apalachia, Farner, Turtletown, Hunter, Ducktown (Ducktown Historic District, NR 5/15/92), and McHarg.<sup>23</sup> These small communities persisted during the early twentieth century largely due to the existence of the railroad. The community of Probst was established along the railroad one mile east of Reliance around 1908 as a logging camp for the Prendergast Lumber Company. This company purchased large tracts of land in the vicinity and Probst was built with a commissary, an office building, a manager's house and worker's housing. There were a reported twenty-five buildings at Probst and a population of two hundred in 1911.<sup>24</sup> The company built a logging railroad up the valley of Big Lost Creek and the logs were hauled to the railroad line at Probst and then transported to the Prendergast sawmill at Wetmore.<sup>25</sup>

The community of McFarland was established in 1890 and it served as a railroad stop between Copperhill and Reliance at mile marker 355. A post office was opened at McFarland in 1895, and a two-story frame hotel and general store were also built by 1898 and operated by Thomas H. Breen.<sup>26</sup> A frame station building was constructed at McFarland, and in 1905 A.R. Arp was listed as the station agent. At its height McFarland contained about a dozen buildings. Seven buildings are shown at McFarland on both the 1927 and 1943 USGS quad maps and these were located both to the north and south of the railroad.

Located at mile marker 360, Apalachia was originally an industrial town on the north side of the Hiwassee River at the confluence of Shuler Creek. Lumber and wood chemicals were manufactured at this location and after the construction of the Knoxville Southern Railroad, a station was built on the south side of the river to help ship these products via rail. An overhead tram was used to haul products over the river from the north bank to the south bank. Known as Apalachia Station, this small railroad community consisted of several

<sup>23</sup> "Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company Lists of Stations and Names of Agents, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1905," and "Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company Passenger Timetable, 1913," Documents on file at the University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, L&N Collection, Louisville, KY.

<sup>24</sup> Roy G. Lillard, *The History of Polk County, Tennessee*, 260.

<sup>25</sup> Thurman Parish, *The Old Home Place*, 93.

<sup>26</sup> Lillard, *The History of Polk County*, 255.

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dwelling and a station. When the timber boom came to an end in the 1920s the original town of Apalachia declined and it became known as "Old Apalachia." Apalachia Station then became known simply as Apalachia. The 1925 profile report listed Apalachia as containing a new railroad station built in 1924 and at the site was also a 50,000-gallon water tank that was added to the site in 1911.<sup>27</sup> During the mid-1930s there were five buildings at this location, all of which were west of the railroad. Three of these were Section Houses and sometimes two families would live in one house.

**Figure 31: View of Probst ca. 1925. (Photo courtesy of the Polk County News)**

**Figure 32: McFarland, ca. 1920, showing the two-story hotel and dwellings (Alice Presswood collection: Photo courtesy of the Polk County News).**

**Figure 33: Plan of Apalachia by TVA in 1942 showing three houses, the water tank, and the railroad station. (Photo courtesy of Louisville & Nashville's Atlanta Division by Michael George)**

Farner grew into one of the larger communities along the railroad between Etowah and Copperhill. A school was built at Farner along with two churches. On the 1943 USGS map the Farner community consisted of approximately thirty-five buildings, including two churches and a school. In the early 1940s the siding at Farner was enlarged and improved as part of the construction of the Apalachia Hydroelectric Project. Turtletown consisted of twelve buildings including two churches. At the small community of Harbuck were three buildings and further south at the town of Postelle were twenty-five buildings one of which was a school. Ducktown itself is shown with over one hundred buildings adjacent to the Burra Burra Mine (Burra Burra Mine Historic District, NR 3/17/83) and McPherson Mine.<sup>28</sup>

During World War I, rail traffic along the L&N increased substantially as men, goods, and munitions were shipped on the railroad for the war effort. This wartime expansion resulted in the enlargement of the workforce at Etowah to over 2,000. With the end of the war revenues for the L&N declined and it posted a loss in 1920. The L&N then moved to cut wages and these reductions resulted in a strike by Etowah workers that began on July 1, 1922.<sup>29</sup> After the workers went on strike, their jobs were soon filled by unemployed workers who came to Etowah following news of the strike. The strike lasted for over seven months with the original workers either losing their jobs or settling for lower wages. Despite the strike the L&N managed to regain profitability and continued its expansion at the Etowah yards. By 1926, new machine shops replaced those destroyed in a fire and a new turntable was also built. In 1927 there were 2,100 men working in the Etowah shops and another 250 served as engineers and brakemen for the engines and rail cars.

<sup>27</sup> "Louisville & Nashville Railroad, Atlanta Division, Condensed Profile, 1925."

<sup>28</sup> Ducktown, United States Geological Map, 1943, Map on file at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>29</sup> Linda Caldwell, ed. *Growing Up With the L&N: Life and Times in a Railroad Town*, (Etowah, Tennessee: Etowah Arts Commission, 1989), 36.

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In the early 1940s, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) constructed the Apalachia Dam and Powerhouse along the tracks near the Hiwassee River. The hydroelectric project was one of three built by TVA in this area of Tennessee and North Carolina. Construction began in 1941 and the powerhouse was placed on line with two turbines in 1943. The main railroad line runs directly between the powerhouse and the two penstocks, and a spur line leads to the powerhouse itself. This spur line is used to transport heavy equipment into the building, and in 2005 it was used to move in new turbines into the powerhouse. Construction of the Apalachia Hydroelectric Development required the rebuilding of the bridge at Reliance in 1939-1940 in order to bring in the heavy equipment needed for dam building and installation of the turbines. Other upgrades to the railroad included the addition or expansion of sidings at Turtletown, Apalachia, McFarland, and Farner. South of the Hiwassee Loop, the Mountain Wye Spur was also built as part of the planning and construction of the Apalachia Hydroelectric Project. The "Wye" railroad spur was designed to provide a place to turn the steam engines that pulled the trains of building materials up from Etowah and Copperhill.

The late 1920s were the heyday for the L&N in Etowah but this prosperity came to an end with the Depression. After the crash of 1929, the fortunes of the L&N declined and the railroad was forced to consolidate its operations. The Etowah offices and shops were moved to Knoxville and by the early 1930s the L&N work force shrank from 2,100 to 80.<sup>30</sup> With the community relying on the L&N for much of its income many businesses were forced to close and a number of houses were left vacant. Etowah's population declined from 4,209 in 1930 to 3,362 by 1940 and the city had difficulties paying its bills and keeping the government afloat. After World War II, Etowah gradually began to diversify its economy by bringing in several small manufacturing facilities. The rise of the trucking industry and increased automobile ownership across the country led to further reductions in passengers and freight along the line. The L&N responded by ceasing passenger service to Etowah in 1959.

The end of passenger service and the reduction in freight traffic was felt all along the line from Etowah to Copperhill. Most of the small depots at locations like Farner, Wetmore, and Ducktown were closed and the residences of railroad workers were either razed, moved, or sold. Gradually all of the buildings at railroad communities such as Apalachia, McFarland, and Austral vanished from the landscape. The depot at Etowah was vacated in 1974 and it sat forlorn for several years until it was restored through community efforts in 1981.

The decline in rail traffic coincided with the reduction of Polk County's copper industry. The vast Burra Burra Mines were closed north of Copperhill in 1959 following the extraction of over 15.6 million tons of copper ore. Gradually most of the remaining copper mines closed until there was little mining activity after 1987. During the 1980s the railroad was part of the Seaboard System's Nashville Division and it continued to be active due to the operations of the Tennessee Chemical Company. This company mined the copper ore and by-products of mines within the copper basin and manufactured industrial acids and chemicals. In 1986, the Seaboard System became part of the CSX Railroad. The CSX Railroad abandoned the line between Wetmore and Copperhill in 2002. The line was then purchased by the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association. The railroad line is now used for scenic excursions and to haul freight. As part of the association's efforts to promote the railroad history of the region, it applied for and received a matching federal grant through the Tennessee Historical Commission. The grant was for a survey and survey report of the Knoxville Southern Railroad in McMinn and Polk counties and was completed in June of 2005. The survey report recommended properties

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 43.

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eligible for listing in the National Register and resulted in the Tennessee Overhill Association receiving a second grant to nominate the Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District.

The nominated section of the railroad begins at the eastern edge of the Reliance Historic District that was listed in the National Register on March 13, 1986. The nominated section ends just south of the Mountain Wye spur at mile marker 366. To the south of this mile marker is the community of Farner which consists primarily of post-1957 dwellings and extensively altered buildings built prior to 1957. In addition to Farner, the communities and landscape south to Copperhill have been extensively altered with late twentieth century development and the feeling and association of the railroad no longer retains integrity from its period of significance.

The Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District between Reliance and the Bald Mountain Switchback strongly retains its historic character. The rural mountainous setting remains much as it did in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the location of the original railroad bed and sidings has not been extensively altered. The overall design of this section of railroad is intact as is the Hiwassee Loop. The design of the Hiwassee Loop continues to be an excellent example of innovative turn-of-the-century engineering methods. The numerous surface features and sites associated with the district are indicative of the railroad's history in the Hiwassee River gorge and have great potential to yield information on the lifestyles and architecture of the railroad and lumber communities along the route.

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District includes the railroad right-of-way and adjacent properties extending from the Hiwassee River Bridge at Reliance at mile marker 346 to mile marker 365 north of the community of Farner. The boundary is within the railroad right-of-way with the exception of adjacent strips of land that originally contained properties associated with the communities and siding stations of Probst, Hiwassee, McFarland, and Apalachia. The boundary is also drawn to include the penstocks and powerhouse of the Apalachia Hydroelectric Project that is directly adjacent to the railroad-right-of-way and figures prominently in the railroad's history. Also included is a bend in the Hiwassee River that contains the Hiwassee Loop as well as the Bald Mountain Switchback and Mountain Wye Spur.

The boundary of the Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District is shown on the accompanying Polk County tax maps 29, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 51, 52, and 53. These maps are half-size 1" = 400' (1" = 800') and the boundary is shown as the dashed line on the maps. In addition to the railroad right-of-way the boundary also includes all of parcel 3 on map 43 south of the railroad. This parcel is included because it encompasses the Mountain Wye Spur and Bald Mountain Switchback.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary for the Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District includes the railroad bed for a distance of nineteen miles in Polk County, Tennessee. The property is bounded on the west by the eastern boundary line of the Reliance Historic District listed on the National Register in 1986. To the west of the Reliance Historic District the railroad passes through rural farmland and small communities that primarily contain post-1956 buildings and structures.

East of the Reliance Historic District the boundary then follows the railroad bed right-of-way and generally 100' on either side to include the associated sites of several railroad communities. The boundary on the north is confined by the Hiwassee River while the southern boundary generally borders steep slopes of mountainous terrain in the Cherokee National Forest. To the south of the Hiwassee Loop the boundary extends along property lines to encompass the Bald Mountain Switchback and Mountain Wye Spur. The boundary ends at this location due to the loss of integrity on the remaining sections of the railroad in Polk County. From the community of Farner to Copper Hill the railroad passes through a landscape characterized by post-1956 buildings and structures.

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## UTM REFERENCES

1. 16/727831/3896633
2. 16/733434/3895543
3. 16/733759/3896229
4. 16/738331/3895257
5. 16/743817/3894713
6. 16/744569/3894820
7. 16/745687/3894419
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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Knoxville Southern Railroad Historic District  
Polk County, Tennessee  
Photo by: Thomason and Associates  
Date: March, 2005  
Location of Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

- Photo No. 1 of 19:    Hiwassee River Bridge at Reliance, view to the northeast.  
Photo No. 2 of 19:    Big Lost Creek Bridge and tracks, view to the east.  
Photo No. 3 of 19:    Probst community site, view to the southeast.  
Photo No. 4 of 19:    Apalachia Powerhouse, view to the east.  
Photo No. 5 of 19:    Culvert over unnamed branch at mile marker 352.  
Photo No. 6 of 19:    Deep Branch Bridge and tracks, view to the northwest.  
Photo No. 7 of 19:    House foundation at McFarland community site, view to the southwest.  
Photo No. 8 of 19:    Cistern at McFarland community site, view to the southwest.  
Photo No. 9 of 19:    Concrete pier water tower foundations at McFarland community site, view to the southwest.
- Photo No. 10 of 19:    Wolf Creek Bridge, view to the northeast.  
Photo No. 11 of 19:    Turtletown Creek Bridge and tracks, view to the east.  
Photo No. 12 of 19:    House foundation at Apalachia community site, view to the south.  
Photo No. 13 of 19:    Apalachia siding, view to the north.  
Photo No. 14 of 19:    Hiwassee Loop Bridge, view to the west.  
Photo No. 15 of 19:    Hiwassee Loop double railroad tracks, view to the northwest.  
Photo No. 16 of 19:    Hiwassee Loop, view of tracks below elevated tracks, view to the northeast.  
Photo No. 17 of 19:    Hiwassee Loop Bridge, view to the north.  
Photo No. 18 of 19:    Mountain Wye Spur, view to the southwest.  
Photo No. 19 of 19:    Railroad cut near mile marker 365, view to the south.

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Owners \_\_\_\_\_ Page 39

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Railroad Right-of-Way:                                    | Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association<br>c/o Linda Caldwell, Executive Director<br>P.O. Box 143<br>Etowah, TN 37331              |
| 2. Sites of Hiwassee, McFarland, and<br>Apalachia            | U.S. Forest Service<br>C/o Federal Preservation Officer<br>Cherokee National Forest<br>2800 N. Ocoee Street<br>Cleveland, TN 37312 |
| 3. Probst Community Site,<br>(Polk County Map 39, Parcel 7): | Lost Creek Land Company<br>c/o Jack Rose<br>107 River Place<br>Louisville, TN 37777  |
| 4. Apalachia Powerhouse/Penstocks:                           | Tennessee Valley Authority<br>C/o Federal Preservation Officer<br>400 Summit Hill Dr.<br>Knoxville, TN 37902                       |
| 5. Polk County Map 43, Parcel 3:                             | Lontrac Inc.<br>P.O. Box 2683<br>Blairsville, GA<br>30514  |

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[illegible]

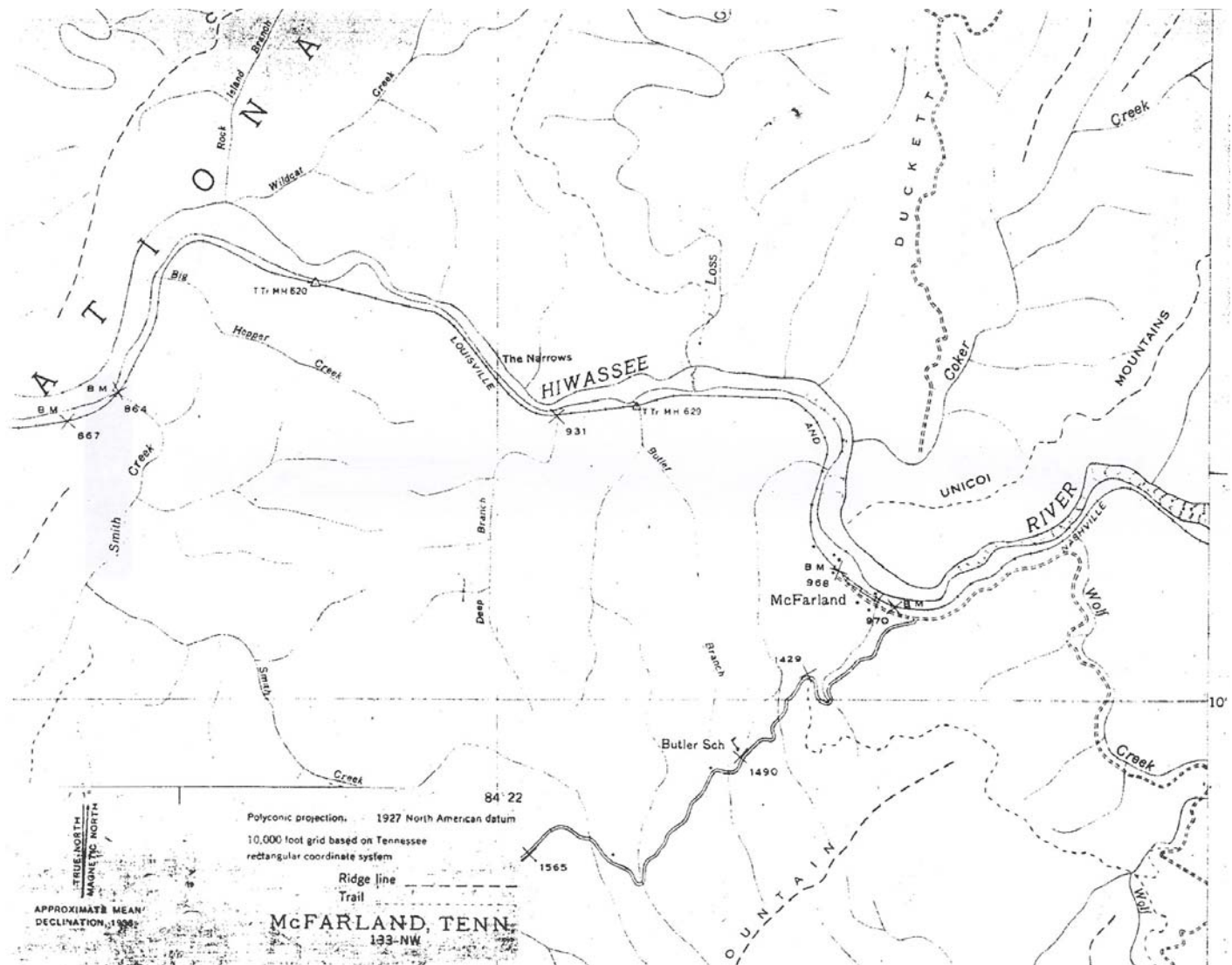
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maps \_\_\_\_\_ Page 41

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## Area around McFarland



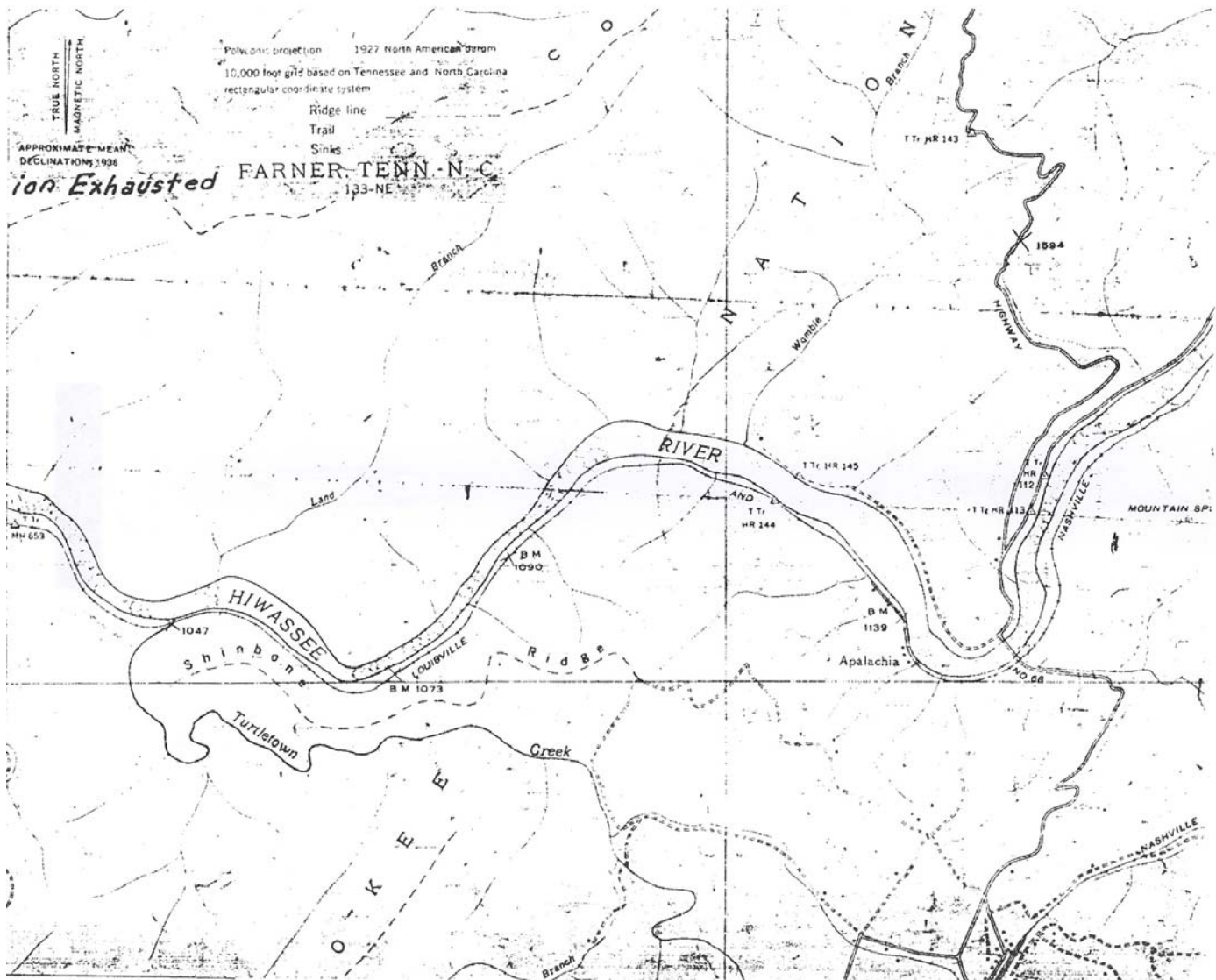
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## Area around Apalachia





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## The Loop, Old Apalachia, and Apalachia

